

Appl. No. 09/934,618
Group Art Unit: 2126
Reply to Office Action of Dec. 10, 2004

Thomas requires the use of both the communication interface device 20 and the adapter cable 22 to achieve the coupling of a communication network to the device 20.

Shafe' discloses a component drive having a programmable interface for dynamically adapting the component drive to communicate over a predetermined bus architecture to an external application. A library of microcodes is stored in the component drive and used to program the interface.

Neither Thomas nor Shafe', alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a single apparatus having a variety of possibly different connectors, whereby each of the variety of different connectors are coupled to communications ports of a programmable coupler, as required by claims 1 and 19. The claimed invention advantageously allows for a variety of devices having a variety of different connections to be coupled to the claimed apparatus, as opposed to Thomas, wherein the single universal connector 26 is to be coupled to a adapter cable 22 that is then connected to the intended communication network 28.

Thomas and Shafe' also fail to disclose or suggest an apparatus for coupling to at least a first device having at least one connector, where the apparatus comprises a variety of connectors of which a first connector would connect to the first device having at least one connector, and a programmable coupler having an input for receiving coupling instructions and having communications ports coupled to the variety of connectors, wherein at least one of the communications ports is coupled to the first connector; the programmable coupler for coupling the at least one communication port in accordance with the coupling instructions, as required by claims 1 and 19. Thomas actually teaches away from such an apparatus because its teaching are limited to an apparatus having a single universal connector that operates only with the communication adapter cable.

In view of the above, Applicant submits that Thomas and Shafe' fail to disclose or suggest every limitation of claims 1 and 19 and the claims that depend from them.

Claim 29 relates to a method in a reconfigurable communication interface for operably coupling to a first device of a variety of devices, where the first step provides the reconfigurable communication interface having a variety of connectors, where the variety of connectors; a programmable logic device having a plurality of communication ports coupled to the variety of connectors; and a controller coupled to the programmable logic device.

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The universal connector disclosed by Thomas in view of Shafe' fails disclose or suggest every limitation of claim 29 and further teaches away from the limitations of claim 29. Applicant submit that claim 29 and the claims that depend from it are allowable for at least the same reasons as discussed above related to claims 1 and 19.

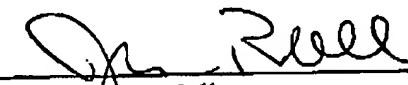
Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §130(a) as being unpatentable over Thomas in view of Shafe' and further in view of Hirono (US 6,633,531). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. As discussed above, Thomas and Shafe' fail to disclose or suggest every limitation of claim 1. Hirono fails to remedy the deficiencies of Thomas and Shafe' as they relate to claim 1. Therefore, claims 8 and 9 are allowable for at least the reason they are dependent upon an allowable base claim. Applicant does not concede the correctness of this rejection.

In view of the above, Applicant request reconsideration of the application in the form of a Notice of Allowance. If a phone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues related to this matter, please contact Applicant's attorney, Brian H. Batzli, at 612.336.4755.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 10, 2005



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